CLAIMS

1.  An authentication apparatus having a plurality of authentication mechanisms, characterized by
5   comprising:

    input means for inputting authentication information of an object of authentication;

    determination means for determining whether the authentication information that has been input by said
10  input means is that of an object of authentication that is capable of changing over the plurality of authentication mechanisms;

    display control means for displaying a list of the plurality of authentication mechanisms if it has
15  been determined by said determination means that the object of authentication is one capable of making the changeover; and

    registration means for registering, as an effective authentication mechanism, an authentication
20  mechanism that has been selected from the list displayed by said display control means.

2.  An authentication apparatus having a plurality of authentication mechanisms, characterized by comprising:

25  input means for inputting authentication information of an object of authentication;

    determination means for determining whether the

authentication information that has been input by said input means is that of an object of authentication that is capable of changing over the plurality of authentication mechanisms;

5      display control means for displaying a list of the plurality of authentication mechanisms if it has been determined by said determination means that the object of authentication is one capable of making the changeover;

10     selection means for selecting an authentication mechanism in the list displayed by said display control means; and

registration means for registering the authentication mechanism, which has been selected by

15     said selection means, as an effective authentication mechanism in a case where the authentication mechanism that has been selected by said selection means has registered authentication information input by said input means.

20   3.   An authentication apparatus according to claim 1, characterized in that said input means reads a card on which authentication information of an object of authentication has been recorded and inputs said authentication information.

25   4.   An authentication apparatus according to claim 1, characterized in that said input means inputs the authentication information by a web browser.

5.    An authentication apparatus according to any one
of claims 1 to 4, characterized in that each of said
plurality of authentication mechanisms has:

    storage means that has registered authentication
5   information of an object of authentication; and

    authentication determination means which, in a
case where entered authentication information of a
user has been registered in said storage means, is for
authenticating this object of authentication.

10  6.    An authentication apparatus according to any one
of claim  5, characterized by further having start-up
means for starting up an authentication mechanism that
has been registered as an effective authentication
mechanism by said registration means.

15  7.    An authentication method of changing over a
plurality of authentication mechanisms and performing
authentication, characterized by comprising:

    an input step of inputting authentication
information of an object of authentication;

20      a determination step of determining whether the
authentication information that has been input at said
input step is that of an object of authentication that
is capable of changing over the plurality of
authentication mechanisms;

25      a display control step of displaying a list of
the plurality of authentication mechanisms if it has
been determined at said determination step that the

object of authentication is one capable of making the changeover; and

a registration step of registering, as an effective authentication mechanism, an authentication

5    mechanism that has been selected from the list displayed at said display control step.

8. An authentication method of changing over a plurality of authentication mechanisms and performing authentication, characterized by comprising:

10    an input step of inputting authentication information of an object of authentication;

a determination step of determining whether the authentication information that has been input at said input step is that of an object of authentication that

15    is capable of changing over the plurality of authentication mechanisms;

a display control step of displaying a list of the plurality of authentication mechanisms if it has been determined at said determination step that the

20    object of authentication is one capable of making the changeover;

a selection step of selecting an authentication mechanism in the list displayed at said display control step; and

25    a registration step of registering the authentication mechanism, which has been selected at said selection step, as an effective authentication

mechanism in a case where the authentication mechanism that has been selected at said selection step has registered authentication information input at said input step.

5    9.  An authentication method according to claim 7, characterized in that a card on which authentication information of an object of authentication has been recorded is read and said authentication information is input at said input step.

10   10.  An authentication method according to claim 7, characterized in that the authentication information input by a web browser at said input step.

11.  An authentication method according to any one of claims 7 to 10, characterized in that each of said

15   plurality of authentication mechanisms has a storage unit that registers authentication information of an object of authentication, and said method further has an authentication determination step which, in a case where entered authentication information of an object

20   of authentication has been registered in said storage unit, is a step of authenticating this object of authentication.

12.  An authentication method according to any one of claims 7 to 10, characterized by further having a

25   start-up step of starting up an authentication mechanism that has been registered as an effective authentication mechanism at said registration step.

13. An authentication method characterized by comprising:

an input step of inputting authentication information of an object of authentication;

5       a first authentication step of authenticating whether an object of authentication has access right to a first system using the authentication information of the object of authentication that has been input at said input step, and allowing the object of

10 authentication to access the first system if authentication succeeds;

a second authentication step of authenticating whether the object of authentication has access right to a second system using the authentication

15 information of the object of authentication that has been input at said input step, and allowing the object of authentication to access the second system if authentication succeeds;

a control step of controlling whether the object

20 of authentication will be managed under management of the first system or under management of the second system; and

a verification step of verifying that authentication of the object of authentication in the

25 second system has succeeded at said second authentication step;

wherein if an instruction that shifts the object

of authentication from management under the first

system to management under the second system has been

recognized, said control step controls said first

authentication step and said second authentication

5    step, in order to shift the object of authentication

from management under the first system to management

under the second system, on the condition that the

authentication of the object of authentication at said

second authentication step has been verified at said

10   verification step.

14.   An authentication method according to claim 13,

characterized in that said control step controls said

first authentication step in such a manner that the

object of authentication is excluded from management

15   at said first authentication step in a case where it

is verified at said verification step that the object

of authentication has been authenticated at said

second authentication step.

15.   An authentication method according to claim 13 or

20   14, characterized in that said first authentication

step authenticates user-level access privilege, and

said second authentication step manages administrator-

level access privilege.

16.   An authentication apparatus characterized by

25   comprising:

input means for inputting authentication

information of an object of authentication;

first authentication means for authenticating

whether an object of authentication has access right

to a first system using the authentication information

of the object of authentication that has been input by

5    said input means, and allowing the object of

authentication to access the first system if

authentication succeeds;

second authentication means for authenticating

whether the object of authentication has access right

10   to a second system using the authentication

information of the object of authentication that has

been input by said input means, and allowing the

object of authentication to access the second system

if authentication succeeds;

15       control means for controlling whether the object

of authentication will be managed under management of

the first system or under management of the second

system; and

verification means for verifying that

20   authentication of the object of authentication in the

second system by said second authentication means has

succeeded;

wherein if an instruction that shifts the object

of authentication from management under the first

25   system to management under the second system has been

recognized, said control means controls said first

authentication means and said second authentication

means, in order to shift the object of authentication
from management under the first system to management
under the second system, on the condition that the
authentication of the object of authentication by said
5    second authentication means has been verified by said
verification means.

17.   An authentication apparatus according to claim 16,
characterized in that said control means controls said
first authentication means in such a manner that the
10    object of authentication is excluded from management
by said first authentication means in a case where it
is verified by said verification means that the object
of authentication has been authenticated by said
second authentication means.

15    18.   An authentication apparatus according to claim 16
or 17, characterized in that said first authentication
means authenticates user-level access privilege, and
said second authentication means manages
administrator-level access privilege.

20    19.   An authentication program characterized by
comprising:

code for implementing an input step of inputting
authentication information of an object of
authentication;

25    code for implementing a first authentication step
of authenticating whether an object of authentication
has access right to a first system using the

authentication information of the object of
authentication that has been input at said input step,
and allowing the object of authentication to access
the first system if authentication succeeds;

5          code for implementing a second authentication
step of authenticating whether the object of
authentication has access right to a second system
using the authentication information of the object of
authentication that has been input at said input step,

10    and allowing the object of authentication to access
the second system if authentication succeeds;

code for implementing a control step of
controlling whether the object of authentication will
be managed under management of the first system or

15    under management of the second system; and

code for implementing a verification step of
verifying that authentication of the object of
authentication in the second system has succeeded at
said second authentication step;

20         wherein if an instruction that shifts the object
of authentication from management under the first
system to management under the second system has been
recognized, said control step controls said first
authentication step and said second authentication

25    step, in order to shift the object of authentication
from management under the first system to management
under the second system, on the condition that the

authentication of the object of authentication at said second authentication step has been verified at said verification step.